

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

14 October 1983

Security Conditions in South Korea
During President Reagan's Visit

ADDENDUM I*

Although we do not see a high likelihood of a direct threat to the security of President Reagan or his party while in South Korea, the recent bombing incident in Rangoon has raised the level of tension on the Korean peninsula. P'yongyang's clandestine propaganda radio continues to reflect North Korea's opposition to the President's visit by repeating earlier warnings that anti-US sentiment in the South will lead to a "stern punishment" should the visit take place. Such propaganda, however, is a common response to US actions that symbolize support for Seoul, and we do not believe it constitutes a threat against the President.

Burmese investigators have uncovered evidence pointing to likely North Korean involvement in the bombing, and, if confirmed, the terrorist act will represent a departure from the less confrontational tactics pursued by P'yongyang in recent years. Growing conviction in South Korea that North Korea was responsible for the bombing will put pressure on President Chun to retaliate, but his options are limited by security concerns.

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of East Asian Analysis in support of President Reagan's East Asian trip.

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Both the South Korean Army and Air Force have standing contingency plans for limited retaliation in kind, but these clearly cannot take into account all current strategic and tactical considerations.

- The country is united by its outrage, and Chun must carefully weigh his next move in order to maintain confidence in his leadership as evidence of North Korean culpability builds.
- Chun has little room to maneuver, however, and he almost certainly recognizes that direct retaliation could escalate into open conflict.
- For the moment, Chun does not appear prone to immoderate actions, and must balance pressures for revenge against longer term strategic--and economic--considerations.
- Chun's actions are likely to be tempered by his desire not to cause postponement of your visit. The visit is now of greater importance to Chun as a sign of Washington's long term security commitment to Seoul.

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